

JAC NEWSbreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

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On my mind this month...



Gail Yamner

Social unrest is not part of JAC's platform but social unrest plays a profound role on women's health and reproductive choice.

When people are protesting on Wall Street and rallying against government spending, the major focus becomes these issues. Jobs and the deficit overshadow social issues. As the debt grows and jobs remain stagnant, the attack on women's rights seems to be of minor consequence. The time is ripe for social conservatives to pass laws that defy science and reflect religious beliefs on life.

The rallying cry for both parties is spending, cut programs and raise revenue without overtaxing. Largely, the cuts are aimed at social programs and entitlements. Women's health has suffered greatly as Planned Parenthood clinics are scapegoated for being abortion mills when they serve mainly to help lower and middle income women get health care. While family planning clinics are being legislated away with laws that violate *Roe v. Wade*, nutrition for pregnant women and food for children are being eviscerated.

Make no mistake. The 2012 elections will greatly affect reproductive rights. If social conservatives have their way, *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned by the Supreme Court (it hinges on one vote) and choice will be sent back to the states where the anti-abortion forces have enacted 62 laws this year. For those of us who remember the days of back alleys and botched abortions, this is unacceptable. For those of us who love our wives, daughters, granddaughters, sisters the return of those days is unconscionable. Those of us who believe in the right to control one's own health and privacy must make this our focus. We must support candidates who uphold our rights.

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Israel

After five years and four months of imprisonment without visits from the International Red Cross, Gilad Shalit was released from Hamas captivity. Captured from his army unit as Hamas crossed into Israel, this pale and gaunt 25-year-old was welcomed back to Israel by his family, PM Netanyahu and Jews all around the world who never forgot about Gilad. In exchange for his release, Israel is freeing 1,027 Palestinian security prisoners. (*JTA* 10/11) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said "we are pleased that a long ordeal... has ended for Gilad Shalit" and that he was held captive for "far too long." For more than five years the Congress of the United States has called for the immediate release of Shalit.

With subdued celebration, Israel realized the dangers inherent in the decision to liberate the Palestinian prisoners. (*Weekly Standard* 10/11) As the Palestinians welcome home terrorists and murderers with wild celebrations in the street, the risks to Israel are evident. Although polls show overwhelming support for the tradeoff, many worry whether this emboldens Hamas (to the detriment of Fatah) and gives them incentives to commit more kidnappings and bring known terrorists back into society. PM Netanyahu, describing the difficulty of the decision, said, "There is an inbuilt tension between the desire to bring back an abducted soldier or citizen and the need to maintain the security of the citizens of Israel. This is my dual responsibility as Prime Minister." Among the group of Palestinians released was the mastermind of the 2001 Jerusalem pizzeria bombing that killed 15 and a woman who used the internet to lure an Israeli teenager to a Palestinian city and had him murdered. (*Commentary* 10/11) Many of the prisoners were serving life sentences for attacks against Israel.

As this release occurs, the parties are still not agreeing to a peace agreement or even to a meeting. This

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United States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The House of Representatives voted this week to pass HR 358, the "Protect Life Act," one of seven anti-choice bills that has passed the Republican-led House since 2010. HR 358 would eliminate the availability of abortion coverage in the upcoming health insurance market, restrict private insurance options for women, allow health care workers and hospitals the "right to refuse" to provide or refer abortion care, even in life threatening situations, and it would restrict religious liberty as hospitals could impose religious views on their patients. President Obama, in a "Statement of Administration Policy," wrote that he strongly opposes HR 358 as this legislation intrudes on women's reproductive freedom and access to health care and unnecessarily restricts the private insurance choices that women have today.

Currently the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act, EMTALA, would protect any person in a life-threatening situation and ensure treatment regardless of any issue or ability to pay. This new bill would override EMTALA. In areas where health care facilities are scarce or in time sensitive cases, women could die as a hospital refused to treat or sent a patient elsewhere. This bill is not expected to make it onto the Senate calendar for consideration.

Time Magazine, October 17, 2011 highlighted the next abortion battleground: fetal heartbeats. Presidential candidate Rep. Michelle Bachmann, (R-MN) has introduced the "Heartbeat Informed Consent Act," that would force a woman to listen to her fetus' heart beat before she could undergo an abortion. As states enact more anti-choice legislation – from waiting periods to parental consent to forced Christian counseling – this new attack on *Roe V. Wade* is gaining traction. This bill would force unnecessary medical testing, in the form of ultrasounds that are sometimes invasive procedures, on all women

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Research & Races

2012 HOUSE RACES

There are currently 192 Democrats, 242 Republicans and 1 Vacancy (OR-1) in the House, to be filled in a January, 2012 special election. The seat was held by Democrat David Wu and demographically favors Democrats. Republicans currently have a 24-seat majority. Redistricting, which occurs every 10 years following the census, has not been completed in most states. New districts are being drawn based on population figures. Whether or not a state has gained or lost seats, the 2012 districts are likely to look different from the 2010 districts. In some cases, the redrawn maps will put two incumbents in the same district or remove an incumbent from a district he or she has represented for several terms.

JAC Races to Watch – Arizona to Illinois

Arizona -- JAC-supported Dem. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ-8) has yet to decide if she will run for a fourth term. Arizona has not announced a filing deadline, but in 2010 it was in May, giving her time to decide if she is well enough to run. Several possible candidates have been mentioned with no official declarations on either side.

California -- Although the Golden State did not gain any seats as a result

of the 2010 census, redistricting based on population movement has created several new seats and put Dem. Reps. Howard Berman and Brad Sherman into the same district (CA-30 – southern San Fernando Valley and Sherman Oaks).

JAC has supported both incumbents, both of whom have perfect records on JAC's issues. Berman was the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee when Democrats controlled the House.

Dem. Rep. Lois Capps (CA-24) will have many fewer registered Democrats in her district and is likely to face strong opposition from former Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado, a Republican with a half-million dollars in his campaign account. Dem. Rep. Linda Sanchez (CA-38) has a lot of unfamiliar territory and an area that is not as liberal as the district she has been representing. Newly elected Dem. Rep. Janice Hahn (CA-36) won the special election to fill the seat previously held by Jane Harman). She has been thrown into an African-American-majority district (CA-44) with Dem. Rep. Laura Richardson. Neither one has officially committed to running in this district.

Florida -- GOP Rep. Allen West defeated JAC-supported Dem. Rep. Ron Klein with 54% in this district (FL-22)

which encompasses Ft. Lauderdale and part of Palm Beach County. The new lines would make it more favorable to a Democrat and West is likely to have a strong Democratic challenger.

Georgia -- JAC supports Dem. Rep. John Barrow (GA-12) who sometimes has found it difficult to vote against anti-choice legislation. But Barrow made a tough "No" vote last week on H.R. 358 to protect women and not allow hospitals to turn away women in need of emergency care. Redrawn lines have made this district even less friendly to a Democrat, especially one who tries to be pro-choice.

Illinois -- The Democratic legislature completed redistricting, but could still be challenged in court. After losing a district because of population decline, the legislature created two new districts without an incumbent and left GOP Reps. Judy Biggert and Joe Walsh living outside their own districts. Neither has declared whether or where to run. JAC has supported Biggert, only one of two Republicans to vote "No" on H.R. 358. Freshman GOP Rep. Robert Dold finds himself in a district favoring Democrats. Currently there is a four-way Democratic primary. JAC's office is in Dold's district.

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seeking abortions. In Texas, a federal judge struck down a similar law saying "this law violates the first amendment and compels physicians to advance an ideological agenda with which they may not agree."

The most extreme legislation being considered is the Personhood Bill in Mississippi. On November 8th, voters

there will decide on Proposition 26, to determine whether a person exists at the moment of fertilization. This bill would outlaw abortion in all cases, including cases of rape and incest. Many fear that along with preventing abortions, this law would also ban fertility treatments and many forms of birth control. (*LA Times*, 10/11)

The ACLU of Mississippi, Planned Parenthood and the Center for Reproductive Rights filed a joint lawsuit to block this bill from appearing on the November ballot, but to no avail. The goal of this law and many others is to limit abortion in the short term, with the eventual goal of a Supreme Court reversal of *Roe v. Wade*.

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stalemate could even lead to new hostilities. (*Time* 10/11) The quartet has tried to bring the parties back to negotiations. Netanyahu has stated his intention to come to the table. Instead of negotiating with Israel, the Palestinians are submitting bids to be recognized by UN committees. They won their first victory with the UNESCO executive committee that backed their bid to become a member of the cultural body with the rights of a state. (*Yahoo News* 10/11) The U.S. is urging delegates at the General Assembly to

vote no and to persuade the parties to engage in face-to-face talks. Many in Congress are threatening to withhold funds to UNESCO if it recognizes Palestinian statehood. This recognition would allow the Palestinians to deny Jewish access to historical sites such as the Cave of the Patriarchs, Rachel's Tomb and the Tomb of Joseph. The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs said a vote in favor of recognition is a vote against the peace process.

Iran has been in the news this week

as the US Justice Department announced the breakup of a plot to kill the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the US in a Washington, DC restaurant and to blow up the Israeli embassy in DC. This breach of international law reinforced the top priority given by the Obama administration to stopping Iran's nuclear ambitions. The administration has led the global effort to place crippling sanctions on Iran and its gas and nuclear energy sector and this botched terrorist attack may persuade other countries to join the US.